

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of Claims shall replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for fabricating a fire retardant composite panels comprising:

creating a water-based slurry of ~~partially soluble boron salts comprising a boron salt solution and a plurality of suspended boron salt particles;~~

adding an adhesive to a ligneous material; and

~~independently~~ introducing said water-based slurry to said ligneous material for fire retarding thereof, wherein said introducing is performed separately from said adding.

2. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said fire retardant composite panel is selected from the group comprising particle board, medium density fiber board, oriented strand board, laminated veneer lumber, and agri-boards.

3. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said creating comprises adding boric acid and borax pentahydrate to water ~~and wherein said water-based slurry comprises a boron salt solution and a plurality of suspended boron salt particles.~~

4. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 3, wherein said creating further comprises selecting a potential of hydrogen (pH) for said water-based slurry of substantially between 4.5 and 5.2.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim 3, wherein said creating further comprises reducing the a particle size of a portion of said plurality of suspended boron salt solids particles in said water-based slurry.
6. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said fire retardant composite panel is substantially compliant with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) E-84 class 1 standard for fire retardance.
7. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 6, wherein said fire retardant composite panel has a density of between 40-48 pounds per cubic foot (lb/ft³).
8. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 7, wherein said fire retardant composite panel has an internal strength of 100 pounds per square inch (psi) or greater.
9. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 6, wherein said fire retardant composite panel comprises approximately 1.75% boron w/w expressed as "B" on an "as is" basis, or less.

10-34. (Cancelled)